

**Abstract**

A digital certificate stored on a smart card is used to facilitate the encoding of a key printed as a bar-code (or other readable indicia) on an item to be delivered to the purchaser or the purchaser's designee. When the purchaser or purchaser's designee attempts to receive the item, the smart card must be presented for correlation with the readable indicia associated with the item as a result of the purchase. The same digital certificate from the smart card must be used to validate the encrypted information associated with the item, so that only the person holding the smart card used at the time of purchase can obtain the item. In a preferred embodiment, the present invention is used in connection with the purchase of tickets redeemable for an event.

M:\MSimpson\IBM\24438 USA\PatOff\spec revised.wpd